

**Testimony of Patricia Alder presented before the Public Health Committee
Regarding Inclusion of Prescriptive Authority for Naturopathic Medicine
Physicians in H.B. No. 6797 (RAISED): AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRACTICE OF
NATUROPATHY.**

March 16, 2015

Esteemed Committee Representatives,

My name is Patricia Alder. My husband and I relocated from Oregon to Bridgeport almost two years ago so that he could attend the Naturopathic program at the University of Bridgeport. As such I have a very unique perspective. I have been a patient of a Naturopathic Doctor in state with greater scope of practice and I'm also the wife of a future Naturopathic Doctor. While we were living in Oregon, I received most of my medical care from my Naturopathic Doctor. Doctor Peterson rarely prescribed pharmaceuticals but he is licensed to do so. This would have been a benefit for me had the need occurred because I didn't have health insurance at the time. I was paying out of pocket for his care, but had the need surfaced for antibiotics or some other pharmaceutical, I would have had to do any of the following if I were living in Connecticut: find a local Medical Doctor, pay a new patient fee, and hope they had a new patient appointment soon; go to an urgent care center and pay; or go to the ER. All three of those options would have been more expensive than the fee I paid to see Dr. Peterson. That added expense would have left me with no money to pay cash for the prescription.

As a wife of a Naturopathic student, many people ask me about his profession. Many of them have heard of Naturopathy but don't understand what they really do. Most people respect the profession. As parents of two children we frequently take them to well-care doctor visits. Since our insurance doesn't cover Naturopathic Doctors as primary care physicians, our pediatricians have been Medical Doctors. Our current pediatrician respects Naturopathic Doctors and used to work with a Naturopathic Doctor that she referred patients to. She shared with me her belief that, "NDs are great at preventative care." I mentioned during one of our recent visits that my husband was studying for his nutrition class. She turned to me and said "Do you know how much nutrition I had in school? None!" She then suggested my husband should work with her after he graduates if we stay here in Connecticut.

This brings me to my next point. Many people ask what our plans are after graduation. To be honest we have no idea. We keep an updated list of states with licensing for Naturopathic Doctors. We also keep track of what the licensing includes so that we can make a decision based off of how my husband can practice. In addition we keep track of the "soft" job offers we have received so far. I know that my husband would like to be able to practice in a state where he can practice to the full extent that he is trained. The University of Bridgeport is in a unique position. They are required to teach the students about pharmaceuticals as mandated by their accrediting agency and professional organizations but they have great difficulty putting it into practice in the clinic prior to graduation. To the best of my knowledge all the other programs in the US can offer their students that practice. Because of the restraint on the licensing here in Connecticut, the University of Bridgeport is sending out students who have the knowledge of prescriptions but have limited practice using them. This makes the school

unappealing for those from the states with better scopes of practice and even from the east coast where University of Bridgeport should be most appealing.

I ask you to please seriously consider allowing Naturopathic Doctors the right to prescribe according to their training. If passed, it would make the program at the University of Bridgeport more appealing to perspective students. It would also remove the inconvenience to those using their Naturopathic Doctors for primary care to run back and forth between an allopathic doctor and Naturopathic Doctor when they need a prescription. It will allow those with chronic conditions that wish to treat using more natural methods to safely taper their prescriptions with supervision. It would also make Connecticut, which I have come to love, more appealing for my husband and me to stay and raise our family. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Patricia Alder

Connecticut resident